

AMENDMENTS

Please amend the application as indicated.

In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A phase lock loop circuit comprising a low power voltage-to-current converter ~~for use in a phase lock loop~~, comprising:
 - an input stage comprising:
 - a pair of differential signal input terminals operable to receive differential input signals from a charge pump;
 - first and second switching transistors each coupled to one of the pair of differential signal input terminals;
 - first and second complementary transistors coupled to the first and second switching transistors, respectively;
 - an output stage coupled to the first complementary transistors; and
 - a non-differential output terminal coupled to the output stage, where the output terminal is operable to transmit an output current signal as a function of voltages associated with the differential input signals.

2. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage-to-current converter of claim 1, where the input stage is a rail-to-rail input stage.

3. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 2, where the rail-to-rail input stage is a resistorless input stage.

4. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 1, where the voltage-to-current converter current source comprises a constant current source for the center frequency of the phase lock loop when the difference between the differential input signals is substantially zero.

5. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 1, wherein the output stage comprises a first output stage and a second output stage, the first output stage being coupled to the first complementary transistor and to the non-differential output terminal, the second output stage being coupled to the first output stage.

6. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 5, wherein the second output input stage comprises a bandgap reference circuit coupled to a bandgap reference signal and to a supply voltage.

7. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 6, wherein the bandgap reference signal is approximately 1.23 to 1.25 volts.

8. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 1, further comprising a biasing transistor coupled to a bias signal and to a supply voltage, wherein the biasing transistor is configured to generate a bias current for the input stage.

9. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 8, wherein a voltage associated with the biasing signal is approximately half of the supply voltage.

10. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 9, wherein the supply voltage is approximately 1.5 to 5 volts.

11. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 10, wherein the supply voltage is approximately 2.2 volts.

12. (Currently Amended) The phase lock loop voltage to current of claim 1, wherein the output stage is operable to provide substantially constant current sources for the center frequency of a phase lock loop resulting in an increase dynamic range of the voltage-to-current converter when the phase lock loop is locked and a voltage difference between the input signals is substantially zero.

13. (Currently Amended) The A-phase lock loop circuit of claim 1, further comprising a phase and frequency detector coupled with a charge pump, a voltage controlled oscillator comprising the voltage-to-current converter and a current controlled

oscillator of claim 1, and a loop filter coupled with the charge pump, the voltage controlled oscillator to current converter being coupled to the loop filter and to with a current controlled oscillator that is coupled with the phase and frequency detector.

14. (Original) The phase lock loop circuit of claim 13, further comprising a frequency divider coupled between the current controlled oscillator and the phase and frequency detector.

15. (Original) The phase lock loop circuit of claim 13, wherein the phase lock loop including the voltage-to-current converter does not have a dominant pole to degrade the phase lock loop stability.

Premier be in default of any of the Agreements, to “accelerate the unpaid [p]rincipal and all interest accrued thereon to become immediately due and payable” (DAN at 1-2.) Finally, the DAN required Defendants to pay all attorneys’ fees and costs incurred in any attempt by Coldwell Banker to collect any payment due under the DAN. (DAN at 2.) Like the Agreements, the DAN is governed by New Jersey law. (DAN at 3.)

Gasbarra signed the Agreements and the DAN on behalf of Premier. (Agreements ¶ 1.2; DAN at 3.) He also executed a “Guaranty of Payment and Performance” for each of the Agreements and co-signed the DAN in his individual capacity. (Agreements at 34; DAN at 3.) Under the Guaranties, Gasbarra is jointly and severally liable for all obligations due under the Agreements, including “all franchise Royalties, Advertising Fees, . . . audit fees, assignment fees, attorneys fees, referral fees, obligations to indemnify and other such charges, fees, and assessments provided for under the [Agreements].” (Guaranties at 1.) The Guaranties, too, are governed by New Jersey law. (Guaranties at 3.)

At no point in his response to Plaintiff’s motion for summary judgment does Gasbarra contest the validity of the Agreements, the Guaranties, or the DAN. Gasbarra also does not contest Plaintiff’s allegations that Premier breached the Agreements, that he breached the Guaranties, and that both Premier and Gasbarra breached their obligations under the DAN. His only apparent dispute concerns “the amount claimed by Plaintiff to be in breach” (Def. Gasbarra’s Resp. to Pl.’s Mot. for Summ. J., at 1.)

The exact date(s) of the breach are not apparent from the record, but Coldwell Banker retained counsel for collection purposes in the fall of 2008. (Iuliano Aff., Ex. C to Def.’s 56.1, ¶¶ 16-17.) By a letter dated November 7, 2008, Coldwell Banker’s counsel advised Gasbarra of Premier’s failure to pay more than \$150,000 in fees owed and threatened suit within 30 days. (Nov. 7, 2008 Letter, Ex. 5 to Iuliano Aff., at 1.) The letter refers to an accounting statement, but no such statement is attached to the copy that appears in the record. (*Id.*)

Evidently, there was no resolution; on April 29, 2009, Coldwell Banker filed this lawsuit. (See Compl. [1].) Coldwell Banker nevertheless continued negotiations to settle the dispute: in a letter dated March 4, 2010, a contract administrator at Coldwell Banker reminded Gasbarra that Premier's account was delinquent and stated that Gasbarra owed \$124,190.78. (Mar. 4, 2010 Letter, Ex. 6 to Iuliano Aff., at 1.) In the event of termination, the letter explained, Gasbarra would be required to pay the balance, post-termination audit fees, and \$100,000 in remaining DAN principal.⁸ (*Id.*)

There is no direct evidence in the record concerning how or whether Gasbarra responded to the March 4, 2010 letter. Coldwell Banker sent a follow-up letter on June 30, 2010, however, stating that, although Gasbarra had made some payments on his account, he had not cured the default. (June 30, 2010 Letter, Ex. 7 to Iuliano Aff., at 1.) Instead, the balance due had actually increased since the March 4, 2010 letter, to \$130,996.98. (*Id.*) In the June 30, 2010 letter, Coldwell Banker also volunteered to extend the termination deadline until August 4, 2010. (*Id.*) Gasbarra did not cure the default or to negotiate another deadline extension. As of August 3, 2010,⁹ Coldwell Banker terminated the Agreements "and accelerated the \$150,000 balance due under the DAN." (Def.'s 56.1 ¶ 21.)

As noted, there is no genuine dispute concerning Defendants' liability. What is disputed is the amount of damages Defendants owe Coldwell Banker as a result of the breaches. Based on the affidavit of Debbie Iuliano, Vice-President of Franchise Administration & Compliance, Coldwell Banker submitted a table stating the various fees owed by each of the four Premier branches (not

⁸ The letter threatened termination of the franchise agreement for the Rockford office; the subject line declares Coldwell Banker's intent to terminate "franchise [a]greement #135052-0001," which is the agreement number that corresponds to the Rockford brokerage office. The court presumes, however, and Coldwell Banker's subsequent conduct confirms, that the intent of the letter was to threaten termination of all Premier's franchise agreements.

⁹ In her affidavit, Iuliano states that Coldwell Banker terminated the agreements and accelerated payment under the DAN on August 3, 2010, even though the final warning letter sent to Gasbarra set the deadline as August 4, 2010.

including attorneys' fees and interest):

Franchise Agreement	Royalty Fees	Lead Router Fee	Advertising Fees	Audit Royalty Fees	Audit Interest and Charges	Total
Rockford, IL	\$35,758.39	\$5,250.00	\$36,056.77	\$30,541.13	\$10,798.64	\$118,404.93
Roscoe, IL	\$63,831.41	\$0.00	\$41,296.52	\$1,339.73	\$344.38	\$106,812.04
Belvidere, IL	\$27,111.29	\$0.00	\$35,631.89	\$2,755.39	\$1,125.71	\$66,624.28
Beloit, WI	\$31,402.96	\$0.00	\$37,873.49	\$551.29	\$168.58	\$69,996.32
TOTAL DUE:						\$361,837.57

(Def.'s 56.1 ¶ 28.) Attached to Iuliano's affidavit is a "Custom Account Status Report" ("the Report"), a business record kept by Coldwell Banker in the ordinary course of business that, according to Iuliano, shows a "breakdown" of the fees owed. (*Id.*; the Report, Ex. 8 to Iuliano Aff.) The Report is fifty-two pages long and lists each individual fee owed by Premier, broken down by brokerage office and fee category (royalties, audit royalty fees, audit interest and charges, advertising fees, etc.). (See the Report at 1-52.) It also reflects the remaining annual principal payments due under the DAN, which total \$150,000. (Report at 7.)

Despite the detail, Gasbarra contends he is unable to confirm royalty fees owed based on the Report because it includes no reference to property addresses, sales prices, or commissions earned. (Def. Gasbarra's Resp. at 2-3.) He also appears to claim that he has, in fact, paid some charges that appear on Plaintiff's Report. (*Id.* at 3.) Gasbarra further disputes Coldwell Banker's damages calculation based on what he claims is Coldwell Banker's standard practice of forgiving all audit and penalty fees as well as interest charges. (Def. Gasbarra's Statement of Facts ¶ 3.) He also contends that his PPA payments for the years 2006, 2007, and 2008 should be, but have not yet been, credited to the balance he owes Coldwell Banker. (Def. Gasbarra's Statement of Facts ¶ 4.)

Initially, both Premier and Gasbarra were represented by counsel in this suit, but on March 18, 2011—shortly after Coldwell Banker filed the motion for summary judgment at issue here—Defendants' counsel withdrew. Since that date, Gasbarra has not retained new counsel to

represent him or Premier. As required by Local Rule 56.2, Plaintiff sent Gasbarra a letter on April 27, 2011, informing him of the requirements under Local Rule 56.1 for filing his response to Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment. (Notice to *Pro Se* Litigant Opposing Motion for Summary Judgment [57].) Gasbarra filed his response to Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment, and a corresponding statement of facts, shortly thereafter.

DISCUSSION

I. Liability

a. Standard on Summary Judgment

Plaintiff Coldwell Banker has moved for summary judgment against Premier for breach of the Agreements (Count I) and breach of the DAN (Count IV) and against Gasbarra for breach of the Guaranties (Count III) and also for breach of the DAN (Count IV). Summary judgment is proper where, construing all facts in the light most favorable to the non-moving party, *Hanners v. Trent*, ___ F.3d ___, 2012 WL 899062, *6 (7th Cir. Mar. 19, 2012) (citation omitted), there is no genuine issue of material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. FED. R. CIV. P. 56(a); see also *Foster v. State Farm Fire and Cas. Co.*, ___ F.3d ___, 2012 WL 884857, *3 (7th Cir. Mar. 16, 2012) (citation omitted). “A genuine issue of material fact arises only if sufficient evidence favoring the nonmoving party exists to permit a jury to return a verdict for that party.” *Hanners*, 2012 WL 899062 at *6 (quoting *Faas v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 532 F.3d 633, 640-41 (7th Cir. 2008)). Summary judgment is “particularly appropriate” where, as here, the dispute centers on contract interpretation. *Lewittow v. ITA Software, Inc.*, 585 F.3d 377, 379 (7th Cir. 2009).

b. Summary Judgment Against Premier

Coldwell Banker wins summary judgment against Premier, essentially, by default. “[A] corporation is legally incapable of appearing in court unless represented by counsel—‘corporations must appear by counsel or not at all.’” *Philos Technologies, Inc. v. Philos & D, Inc.*, 645 F.3d 851, 857-58 (7th Cir. 2011) (quoting *Scandia Down Corp. v. Euroquilt, Inc.*, 772 F.2d

1423, 1427 (7th Cir. 1985)). After counsel for Premier and Gasbarra withdrew in March 2011, Gasbarra never obtained new representation for Premier, despite the court's admonishment to that effect. (See April 25, 2011 Minute Order [56]) ("Defendant Gasbarra is reminded that a corporation can be represented in court only by a licensed attorney."). Nor can a *pro se* litigant like Gasbarra proceed on behalf of Premier. *Nocula v. UGS Corp.*, 520 F.3d 719, 725 (7th Cir. 2008) (citing 28 U.S.C. § 1654).

It is not clear whether Gasbarra intended to file a response to Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment on behalf of Premier. On one hand, his motion is titled simply "Defendant Gasbarra's Response to Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment," but on the other, he repeatedly refers to himself as "Franchisee/Gasbarra," thereby conflating Premier's legal existence with his own individual capacity as a guarantor and co-signer on the DAN. (Def. Gasbarra's Resp. at 1.) Gasbarra may not respond on behalf of Premier, however, and thus, Premier has failed to respond to Coldwell Banker's factual allegations against it. Under Local Rule 56.1, a responding party's failure to controvert the moving party's factual statements constitutes an admission of those facts for summary judgment purposes. *Smith v. Lamz*, 321 F.3d 680, 683 (7th Cir. 2003) (citing L.R. 56.1). As against Premier, Plaintiff's statement of material facts is deemed admitted.

Under New Jersey law, which governs the Agreements, to establish a breach by Premier, Coldwell Banker must show that (1) a valid contract existed between the parties; (2) Premier breached the contract; (3) Coldwell Banker fulfilled its own contractual obligations; and (4) Coldwell Banker suffered damages resulting from the breach. *Frederico v. Home Depot*, 507 F.3d 188, 203 (3d Cir. 2007). Plaintiff has provided evidence that (1) it entered into four valid franchise agreements with Premier; (2) Premier failed to pay various fees, including royalty and advertising fees, as required by the Agreements; (3) Coldwell Banker allowed Premier to use its system and marks from the date of the Agreements through their termination in 2010; and (4) Coldwell Banker suffered financial loss as a result of Premier's failure to pay all fees owed under the Agreements.

The court grants summary judgment against Premier on Count I.

Premier is similarly liable for the remaining principal on the DAN. Under the terms of the DAN, Coldwell Banker retained the right to “accelerate the unpaid Principal and all interest accrued thereon to become immediately due,” should Premier default on the DAN or the Agreements. (DAN at 1-2.) Coldwell Banker properly exercised that acceleration clause on August 3, 2010, when it terminated the franchise agreements based on Premier’s failure to pay fees. Thus, the court also grants summary judgment against Premier on Count IV.

c. Summary Judgment Against Gasbarra

Plaintiff has moved for summary judgment against Gasbarra based on breach of the Guaranties (Count III) and on breach of the DAN (Count IV). Like the Agreements above, the Guaranties are contracts subject to the same standard for proof of breach. Though Gasbarra responded to Plaintiff’s motion for summary judgment on his own behalf, he did not contest any of the material facts related to the breaches. The court deems as admitted all Coldwell Banker factual statements regarding the existence, and breach by Gasbarra, of the Guaranties and the DAN.

Specifically, Plaintiff has shown a valid contract of guaranty for each of the Agreements and that Gasbarra breached the Guaranties when he failed to make payments on the fees owed by his corporation Premier under the Agreements. Gasbarra has not argued that Plaintiff failed to meet any of its obligations under the Guaranties or the Agreements, and Plaintiff has suffered financial loss resulting from Gasbarra’s failure to fulfill his obligations under the Guaranties. Thus, Plaintiff has proven Gasbarra’s breach of the Guaranties. Moreover, the analysis pertaining to Gasbarra’s breach of the DAN is the same as that of Premier’s breach of the DAN above. Therefore, the court must grant summary judgment against Gasbarra on Count III for breach of the Guaranties and on Count IV for breach of the DAN.

II. Damages

Although Plaintiff is entitled to summary judgment on all three claims, the court requires

further proceedings to determine the extent of the damages Premier and Gasbarra owe to Coldwell Banker. Plaintiff argues that the court should disregard any factual dispute regarding damages raised by Gasbarra in his response since the response fails to comply with Local Rule 56.1. The court construes the submissions of a *pro se* litigant leniently, however. Even where the nonmoving party completely fails to respond to the movant's facts, summary judgment is appropriate *only* if there is no genuine issue of material fact. *Cooper v. Lane*, 969 F.2d 368, 371 (7th Cir. 1992). That is, Plaintiff stills bears the burden of establishing that there is no genuine issue of material fact regarding the calculation of its damages.

Here, Plaintiff has not satisfied the court that there are no genuine issues of material fact regarding the amount of damages for which Premier and Gasbarra are liable. There are several aspects of the damages award that require further exploration. First, while the March 4 and June 30, 2010 letters from Coldwell Banker to Gasbarra state that the remaining DAN principal is \$100,000, Coldwell Banker now seeks \$150,000 in damages owed under the DAN without explanation of the inconsistency. Second, the Custom Account Status Report reveals another possible discrepancy; despite the fact that the Agreements say the advertising fees shall not exceed \$1,000 per office per month (Agreements ¶ 8.2), the Report routinely reflects monthly advertising fees in excess of \$1,000 for each of the four Premier brokerage offices. (See, e.g., Report at 7-9, 19-21, 34-35, 42-43.) Third, Gasbarra asserts that PPA awards for 2006, 2007, and 2008 were not credited against the fees owed, despite Coldwell Banker's prior practice of doing so. (Def. Gasbarra's Statement of Facts ¶ 4.) Coldwell Banker responds that payment of the PPA awards is contingent upon a franchisee's compliance with the franchise agreement and asserts that because Premier breached the Agreements, Coldwell Banker had no obligation to pay or credit Premier for the PPAs. (Pl.'s Resp. ¶ 4.) But the provision in the Agreements that Plaintiff cites in support of this assertion says only that Plaintiff "may" impose such a condition, not necessarily that it did. (Agreements ¶ 7.3.) Moreover, the January 2004 Letter Agreement demonstrates that

Premier and Gasbarra have defaulted on substantial fees in the past, yet until now, Gasbarra insists, Coldwell Banker has always credited PPA payments to his unpaid balance. (Def. Gasbarra's Statement of Facts ¶ 4.) Finally, the damages award suggested by Plaintiff does not include attorneys' fees or interest earned subsequent to its filing for summary judgment. Therefore, further proceedings are necessary to ascertain the amount of damages Defendants owe to Plaintiff.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons explained herein, the court grants Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment [41] on all three counts. A status is set for April 10, 2012 at 9:00 a.m., at which time the court will schedule a hearing to determine the extent of the damages owed. The parties are encouraged to attempt to settle their differences.

ENTER:



Dated: March 28, 2012

REBECCA R. PALLMEYER
United States District Judge